

## Whangarei District Council Environment meeting - 8th June 2011

### [LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)

Chair Cr Shelley Deeming welcomes all with a good morning, to all those present at 1030hrs.

Apologies were received for Mayor Morris Cutforth, who is on leave of absence. Other apologies were for Cr Greg Martin (*attending a conflicting NRC Transport meeting - Bad timing*) Cr Sue Glen, Cr Jeroen Jongejans, Cr Kahu Sutherland and Cr Brian McLachlan.

Item No. 1 - The minutes for the previous Environment Committee, Wednesday, 11 May 2011 meeting were accepted with no discussion taking place.

With the time at 1031hrs it was on to The Environment Group Monthly Report May 2011, Item No. 2 and Environment Group Manager Paul Dell was asked by the chair to speak to the report as they proceeded through it page by page.

Cr Merv Williams queried about staff losses in Resource consents.

Paul Dell confirmed they had lost a number of staff.

Cr Merv Williams queried that if external consultants were used were the clients informed.

Paul Dell explained they added 5% to the cost of consultants. He continued that they were running a business; they were achieving timelines and were getting applications processed.

Cr Merv Williams felt the applicant should have the option of using an internal or external consultant and be aware of the cost schedule. *Merv, I think they are getting uncomfortable about your questions on this issue. Why? Do you know the answers and that is why you are asking the questions, but they don't appear to want it in the public arena do they? This will be shut down shortly.*

Paul Dell believed that clients didn't look at the costs and council's goal was to process applications. *Paul, many people do watch costs, (they may not be overpaid c/s) so do you think you may be out of touch with the community?*

Cr Sharon Morgan, (in reference to page 12. b) queried if the urban designer was a local.

Cr Shelley Deeming (in reference to page 12) informed that the Rural Development Strategy still needed to go out to the community.

Cr Sharon Morgan, in reference to Plan Change 113, Ruakaka racecourse, seeking the number of submissions to this proposal.

Paul Dell was not sure and will get back to her, but continued that there had been a lot of community interest.

Cr John Williamson (in reference to page 12) Country Countryside Environment Boundary informed there was a meeting next week to define the Coastal Countryside Environment. He hoped there would be a complementary component in identifying the 'line'.

Cr Merv Williams, referring to pg 13 (g) insisted that they need to be kept up to date on the Northland Regional Council Regional Policy Statement (RPS)

Cr Phil Halse confirmed the RPS is a key document for the planning of Northland and it must be done with 'Northland together'.

*It is noted on page 18 &19 in the 'Enforcement actions' of the report there is no provision for 'squashed infringement notices', which indicates these figures are not accurate. Maybe Cr John Williamson, CEO Mark Simpson and Environment Group Manager Paul Dell could amend this to maintain accuracy. Wouldn't you hate the auditors to see things were being hidden? Oh John Williamson, (Mr Road Safety) have you forgotten about the parking ticket, outside a school on yellow lines, you manipulated to be cancelled?*

With the time at 1052hrs it was on to Item No. 3 - Customer Satisfaction Survey Paul Dell informed it was a two yearly survey done independently. *Oh Paul, Is this just like the 'independent' Unitary Authorities review? If so, should we ignore it?* He continued it was the first time they had included Policy and Monitoring.

Cr Sharon Morgan mentions there are really good results about resource consents about how they identify a person who you are going to work with throughout the process.

Cr Crichton Christie comments "that the Dog registration has shown some good results since the review some 5 years ago, I know it's taken a while but it's getting there and that review was not a waste of time at the end of the day". *Very interesting comments Crichton, as you should be well aware, we had a large input to the 'review' and on Wednesday 14th October 2009 I approached Cr Deeming and Mr Dell to visit the pound and see what improvements had been done. Our request was blatantly denied by Mr Dell 12/11/2009 'With all the changes that have been put in place I see no reason why you need to "look around the pound" and therefore decline your request to do so.' following a follow up written request from us four weeks later, and after again attempting to substantiate our reasoning to visit, he replied with the following again on 12/11/2009 'Warren clearly not all matters of the review have been addressed at this time however we are aware of that. In due course I will update Council. My decision re the visit has not changed. Regards Paul Dell Group Manager Environment Whangarei District Council Direct dial 09 430 4218.*

*To this date **no one** has had the common courtesy to discuss the request to visit again with us, so we must presume no improvements have been done to the facilities to facilitate a visit to the pound to check what of the 34 odd recommendations had been*

*addressed of the 5th September 2007 Dog Control Review and subsequently passed by council. We do believe that the contractor has made a number of changes to their style of enforcement, but personally we believe it's been the councils previous lack of monitoring that had allowed situations to develop prior to the review. In September 2007 when Mr Dell joined WDC we felt we had a 'breath of fresh air' to the department. How disappointing it turned out to be. Could it just be SMS? We have learnt not to hold ones breath when waiting for action from this and previous council on this matter. There is more than one way to skin a cat.*

Crichton also believed that General Applicants should be as good as Professional Applicants with resource consents and the system should enable this. The challenge is for the General applicants to be able to do it themselves.

Cr Merv Williams stated that they were still looking at a 2/3 satisfaction rate.

Paul Dell confirmed 'it's moving in the right direction and they are working on it'.

Cr John Williamson mentioned that the District Plan needed to be easy to understand but not to a kindergarten stage.

Paul Dell confirmed some aspects of the District Plan (DP) could be improved.

Policy and Monitoring Manager Paul Waanders informed that full documentation was available on file and available if people want it. The document (DP) is to be a public document as outlined in Section 32 of Resource Management Act (RMA) & Local Government Act (LGA). [See link for Section 32](#)

Paul Dell confirmed Section 32 was a good example, it engages with the community.

*Yes, it does but there is nothing in it about having to listen to the community; as long as the box gets ticked, the job is done as far as Local Authorities are concerned.*

Item No. 4 (now1107hrs) Final Consideration of Plan Change 69 - Waipu Rezoning

Cr Phil Halse mentions that it has taken 7 to 8 years in the making and it's through now. We now have to get people around the table.

Cr Aaron Edwards, astutely asks 'what was the flooding checked against'? *You are on form today Aaron, that's a couple of questions they have been unable to/or don't want to answer in the public forum.*

Paul Dell answers that he will have to check.

Cr Shelley Deeming says it's been great even the locals have been out looking at the rivers. *After what has happened around the world with flooding perhaps many are scared stiff. Perhaps councils need to be well on the side of caution. Personally I believe, if Whangarei was to experience a tsunami of a large magnitude it will be Bye-bye to Langs Beach, Waipu, Ruakaka, One Tree Point, Marsden Point, Waikaraka, Tamaterau, Oakura, Ngunguru, Matapouri, etc etc. Has no one noticed the increase in beach properties for sale compared to only a year or so ago? It's telling you something. People are uncomfortable living in suspect low lying areas and we continue to develop the 'flats' around our district. Oh I could go on.*

Cr Merv Williams was pleased they had taken local knowledge into account as there had been excellent feedback from locals.

With the time at 1110hrs it was on to Item No. 5. Resource Consents and Complaints Monitoring Report 2007/08 - 2009/10

Paul Dell informed this was a requirement of the Resource Management Act (RMA). It was a piece of information that is used around growth strategy.

No more discussion was needed, it was all over.

Cr Shelley Deeming, excitedly gives a 'Yeh- ha'; claiming 'all motions carried unanimously.' *Gee I thought she was about to wet her pants with all the excitement, let's hope she held on.*

The meeting concluded at 1112hrs with Cr Deeming thanking all for attending.